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Alex didn't let the gravity of the moment overcome him.

He was never one to freeze up in fear or bu er when it came to making a split second decision, yet as another so click came from the door he struggled to focus and not let the danger Ameena was suddenly neck deep in get to him.

With the grace of a lithe cat, he gently set the cup of steaming co ee down on the table and slowly backed away from the hallway heading towards the direction of her bedroom, feet so ly sinking into the carpet until his back brushed the wooden door.

Silently he slipped in, firmly shutting the door.

He had about a minute tops, to get prepared. Ameena's shitty lock couldn't withstand mafia technology. Another 15 seconds and they'll be inside and for the rest of the minute, they'd silently file inside one by one.

The fact that they didn't barge in and rather chose to commence with a silent mission gave Alexander the advantage.

He wondered if his brother was with them but highly doubted it.

Alanzo wasn't a fool.

He closed and locked the door behind him, going straight for Ameena's closet, eyes barely glancing at the figure curled up under the sheets. Pushing aside her clothes, he withdrew a du el bag he had discreetly hidden there out of her notice and quickly but silently dug everything out of it. He had unzipped the false bottom and withdrew a gun, ejecting the magazine to make sure it was loaded before snapping it back in.

Removing the suppressor, he twisted it in place while walking towards the door opening it wide enough to peer through the crack.

Times like this made him appreciate the simple yet complex design of Ameena's apartment. The kitchen was visible from his angle allowing him sight of the first man who was standing beside the window, using a gun to push aside a curtain peering out while speaking into his earpiece.

When he turned slightly, Alex shut his eyes and inhaled.

He knew the guy. Romano. One of Alanzo's newbie recruits fresh from Italy.

Did his brother underestimate him so much that he thought to send a fucking newbie?

Alex pursed his lips, thinking. Maybe it wasn't about underestimating but more about who's most disposable, this new guy would be collateral damage. Alonzo couldn't handle his well trained assassins dying o like flies.

Alexander didn't know if he was smart or just really dumb.

The man seemed to be alone, as if waiting, that is until Bianca entered his line of vision holding sipping on the cup of co ee he was drinking moments ago. She was wearing her usual baby doll pink crop top and white shorts that stopped just short of her ass, a rifle twisting in one hand.

Stupid, stupid, Alonzo.

Five of them. Scouring the room, unaware that the person they were looking for was watching them zero gun in hand.

Or maybe they weren't looking for him.

"Why don't we just check the bedroom?" One of them hissed.

"Shut up," Bianca snapped sending a glare towards him, "We need to find it first, it must be somewhere around here."

"It could be in ther—"

"Shut up Yuro," another hissed, "They're in there sleeping."

Alexander face palmed. Literally face palmed. His brother did not send a couple of morons a er him and the chip. He had to be hallucinating.

But he wasn't, and the moment Ameena turned and made a sound behind him he suddenly remembered he was protecting her. Two heads snapped to his direction the moment he moved out of view, heart peaking at the thought of them heading in their direction.

Ameena was up, her hand gathering a bundle of the comforters up to her chest as she stared at him weirdly.

He motioned for her to keep quiet with a finger to his lips. Both her eyebrows knit together in absolute confusion.

Seeing her now awake had a plan forming almost immediately in his brain. Risky, but he hadn't a choice at the moment, either he had to wait for them to reach the bedroom or go outside and face them head on and start a possible gun shoot out in the middle of her nice and homey apartment.

He grabbed his pants and was tugging it on, sliding his phone into his back pocket, all while placing a robe in her hands.

"I want you to go out there, act surprised, don't fight, let them take you," his words came out rushed, too quick for her sleep webbed mind to process. Ameena's eyes flickered from the gun in his hand to the sudden haunting silence in the room.

"What are you talking about? Did you hit your head when you—"

"Ameena," Alex's hand over her mouth cut her o, the dead set of his eyes swallowing whatever snarky remark she was brewing, "there's five people inside the house, and they will kill us if you do not do as I say. Capire?"

If her heart was thumping, she didn't feel it. The sudden numbness overtook her senses trying to place why Alex was speaking rapidly, words interchanging between English and Italian.

That is, until it hit her.

She blinked as the only words she could think of le her mouth with an angry hiss, "But I have work."

Alexander regarded her a moment, lips twitching upwards at her comment despite the situation they were in. Sometimes, her priorities really had him wondering.

"Just do as I say, please."

She bit her lip, an action he found very tempting. If they got out of this alive, the things he planned to do to her to make up on all those lost time.

He looked away as she rolled out of bed and got up, stark naked before tugging the robe over her body, not before he had a chance to see the many marks that littered her skin. Love bites he took pleasure in.

Ameena paused at the door, shaky hand reaching for the doorknob, before chancing a hesitant glance at him one last time before inhaling and stepping out. She le the room, quite shakily and he had to keep himself under control when he heard her yell, teeth clenching and his fingers tightening around the gun in his hand, he inhaled and exhaled before stu ing the gun at the back of his pants feeling the coolness of the metal press against his lower back.

Then he waited calmly.

As calmly as he could with his fist shaking as he heard a mu led scream.

No sooner had the sounds died down than the door opened. Alex found himself staring into the black barrel of a gun pointed directly between his forehead.

"Get up," Romano ordered jerking his chin up.

Obediently, Alex rose with his palms facing up in a show of innocence. Alex followed the order, rising o the bed and keeping his hands raised. For a split second, the gun burned against his skin urging him to put a bullet between the man's bushy eyebrows.

One single shot.

But the thought of miscounting the number of people in the house had him hesitating.

Romano gestured with a slight shake of his gun for him to move out, and he did. The man walking being him, gun hitting his back ever so o en urging him forward.

When he walked into the living room, it took everything to not pull the gun from his back and shot each and every one of them. Bianca especially, who was sitting atop Ameena's back pressing a gun into her temple while playing using her free hand to play with her kinky hair.

Ameena's gaze was fixed straight ahead, jaw clenched tightly, a look of pure undiluted rage at the petite girl who sat on her.

"On your knees," Romano snarled, Alex followed without hesitation letting them believe they had the upper hand.

"Now that you both are here," A man spoke up, he recognized this one as the man who had the phony bagel. Horrible acting if he had a say.

The woman and the man who were on the bench were now searching with vigor, now not caring in the slightest as things crashed to the floor loudly. Flipping open cupboards, tossing furniture around, smashing portraits.

Alexander stopped himself from rolling his eyes, amateurs. What if someone heard the ruckus and phoned the police?

They weren't thinking. Not only that but, no one had even searched him.

His squadron would never make this mistake.

"Where is it?" The man continued.

"It?" Alexander played dumb.

"The chip," the man spoke coolly, beady black eyes watching Alexander in deep scrutiny.

"Oh that... what makes you think I have it?" Alex raised an eyebrow.

Romano moved faster than Alex could comprehend, the butt of his gun hitting Alex square in the jaw. His head snapped to the side, dull stars clouding his vision momentarily as the taste of copper evaded his mouth. Rolling his tongue over the wound in his mopper, Alex swallowed the iron while narrowing his gaze at Romano.

"You are in no place to play coy with us, do you understand?" The man sneered at him, "Alon—the boss gave us intel that you had it, now where is it?!" His voice rose an octave higher out of vain frustration but Alex kept the blank clueless expression on his face.

Incompetent

"Well," Alex started, "I don't have it with me or on me at the moment." He wondered why Alonzo wanted it in the first place, Alexander was the one supposed to give it to the godfather in the first place.

Had the plans changed without his notice?

"Come on baby," Bianca licked her red lips with a purr, the gun she held stroked Ameena's cheek almost lovingly, "speak or I'll be forced to... dispose of this nappy headed slut." Her smile was dark and catlike, teeth flashing under the light. Ameena exhaled, nostrils flaring, but she held her tongue clearly not amused.

Alex shi ed on his knees, the gun was burning a hole through his lower back at the thought of emptying the bullets in all their heads. His lips remained pursed, eyes meeting Ameena's with silent begging forgiveness.

Bianca watched the silent exchange with a foreign, corners of her lips tugging up as a realization sunk in, "No way!" She shi ed her weight over Ameena, gripping a fistful of her hair in order to li her face. Her eyes scrutinized Ameena's with childish mocking awe, "so she's the reason you don't fuck me anymore!"

Pin drop silence settled in the room, the other of that had men shi ing their weight from one foot onto the other uncomfortably, the couple had paused their kitchen rampage to stare at the growing tension sharp enough to slice the atmosphere.

He was sure all of this had happened and more but he was too focused on Ameena to care, and the fact that she seemed to be coming to a moment of recognition of her own.

"So you're that red lipped bitch who kissed him," her voice was a whisper but it seemed to echo throughout the room, the cloud on her eyes li ed and she regarded Bianca with newfound interest and a glint of darkness in her eyes.

Everything seemed to happen in slow motion a er that. Ameena moved with like a viper, twisting out of Bianca's grip and coiling her fist back only to slam it into her face.

The sickening sound of a bone crunching echoed in the room as Bianca staggered back, tripping over a pillow landing on her butt, hand pressed over her nose in disbelief. Blood slipped from between her fingers.

Ameena paused a moment, towering over Bianca, chest rising and falling rapidly with a foreign blaze in her eyes right before the expression crumpled into disbelieving pain while clutching her throbbing hand. "Gesù Cristo!"

Alex snapped out of the momentary trance and slammed his elbow into Romano's 'goods', reaching for his gun, the safety was o right before Romano hit the ground, and pulled the trigger.

A black hole appeared at the center of his head, dark blood seeping from it, eyes wide open but empty.

Without the slightest bit of hesitation, shot the other man once-then twice just as he was reaching for his own gun. His body slammed against the wall from the force, before sliding down leaving a thick trail of blood on the wall in its wake.

He lunged for Ameena who was still hopping at the center of the living room, cussing four letter words that would've had the pope crying, while cradling her fist tackling them both to the floor just as the remaining couple shot at them pausing to reload their guns and call for backup.

Alex flattened himself on top of her still raging figure while the others shot two more rounds at them, the silent thumping of bullets embedding themselves into her couch sending feathers flying in the air.

At least they had enough sense to bring silencers.

"Stay." He ordered leaving her behind while crawling on his elbows, the carpet's friction burning his exposed skin, before halting at the edge to peer at them.

Alex raised his gun and aimed it at the man's exposed knee just as they ducked behind the counter to reload. He pulled the trigger, not a second later a high shrill echoed from their side as bone and flesh hung out of his maimed knee cap. The moment the man dropped, Alex pulled the trigger twice, one bullet catching his chest while the other his right eye.

He went still.

As expected, the woman screeched and dropped to his side, pulling the man's head onto her lap hand pressed over his chest in an attempt to stop the bleeding.

Alex's finger weighed heavily on the trigger already aimed for her temple- but hesitated at the sight of her tortured face.

One moment of hesitation could cause you your life in a gunfight but, there was something so familiar in the way she shook and screamed for her supposed lover

Maybe his hesitation was because that could've easily been him and Aimee. Presently and even in the near future.

He closed his eyes, letting the darkness numb him before squeezing the trigger. Her silence was quick, the sound of her body hitting the floor with a heavy thump. Alex opened his eyes only to stare at her empty ones, pupils empty, snu ed of light.